

## WHEN TO AVOID THE SLAM

I was sitting South with this hand in a recent game on iBridgePlus, the bridge playing App available at the Apple App Store:

South  
 ♠ J  
 ♥ AKQ108532  
 ♦ AK  
 ♣ J8

East dealt and I would have opened this South hand 2♣ if East hadn't beat me to the punch. I am too strong to overcall. My 8-card heart suit is worth about 15 points. The diamonds add another 7 points. I must double and then bid my hearts over partner's response. This is called the Type II or the Big Double, and shows a hand of 18+ points. The problem is that the bidding of 1♥ over 1♦ is not forcing. I definitely don't want to be passed with this hand. The expert solution is to jump to 2♥. This promises 6+ hearts and is forcing for one round. Cue bidding 2♣ and then bidding hearts would also be strong but doesn't promise more than five hearts.

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Dbl
Pass	1♦	Pass	2♥
3♣	3♥	Pass	3♠
4♣	4♥	All Pass	

After West inserted a raise of his partner's clubs, my partner made a positive response supporting my hearts. Now I can add about 5 more points. This hand is definitely slam worthy. The only problem is that I could lose the first two club tricks. I can find out if partner has 1st or 2nd round control of clubs by starting a control cue bid sequence. I started with 3♠, the next suit up the line. Partner ignored West's 4♣ and retreated to 4♥. That meant he doesn't have club or diamond control. He could have doubled to show club control. I didn't bother to check on aces and just passed the game contract.

West leads the ♣10 and you I saw this dummy:

Vul: E/W		North ♠ K974 ♥ J84 ♦ Q9654 ♣ Q
	West ♣10	South ♠ J ♥ AKQ108532 ♦ AK ♣ J8

West led the ♣10. I have just two losers, the spade and club aces. The lead was won by East's ♠K, and he switched to diamonds. This gave me an opportunity to make overtricks. Overtricks are particularly important in 'match point' games. I noticed that I have the ♦Q in the dummy on which I can pitch my losing ♠J.

I won trick 2 in hand and pulled the outstanding two trump with the ♥A. I then unblocked the ♦A and went to the dummy in hearts to play the ♦Q, discarding the ♠J from my hand. I then claimed with 2 overtricks. Of course, if I were in slam, East would have taken the ♠A before he switched to diamonds on trick 2. I can't blame him for waiting to capture the dummy's ♠K in our game contract.

Here is the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;"> <span style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 2px;">D</span> 16         </div>	<b>N</b> North ♠ K974 ♥ J74 ♦ Q9654 ♣ Q	<table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <tr><th>W</th><th>N</th><th>E</th><th>S</th></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>1♣</td><td>X</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>1♦</td><td>P</td><td>2♥</td></tr> <tr><td>3♣</td><td>3♥</td><td>P</td><td>3♠</td></tr> <tr><td>4♣</td><td>4♥</td><td>P</td><td>P</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	P	1♣	X	P	1♦	P	2♥	3♣	3♥	P	3♠	4♣	4♥	P	P	P			
	W	N	E	S																						
	P	P	1♣	X																						
	P	1♦	P	2♥																						
3♣	3♥	P	3♠																							
4♣	4♥	P	P																							
P																										
<b>W</b> West ♠ Q10532 ♥ 6 ♦ 87 ♣ 109642	<b>E</b> East ♠ A86 ♥ 9 ♦ J1032 ♣ AK753																									
	<b>S</b> South ♠ J ♥ AKQ108532 ♦ AK ♣ J8																									
		<span style="background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 2px;">4♥ S</span> NS: 0 EW: 0																								

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/zojkgry>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.